



NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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Whitman County awards Public Facilities Funds to Port

.09 Funds awarded for Fiber-to-the-Home and Rural Fiber Extensions to Transmitter Sites

Colfax (August 6, 2019) — The Port of Whitman County was awarded \$1 million from Whitman County's .09 funds (sales and use tax for public facilities in rural counties) to design and construct a fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network in five rural towns in Whitman County. The project will also bolster an existing transmitter network with mid-mile fiber extensions to three transmitter sites.

The project timeline states that design is expected to be completed by the end of 2019 and will overlap with obtaining permitting approvals. The expected start of construction is in the second quarter of 2020. "Construction is expected to be completed by the end of 2021," says Joe Poire, executive director for the Port. "The first project milestone of obtaining environmental approvals is complete."

The estimated total cost of the project is \$4 million dollars. The Port committed a \$2 million local match for .09 grant, \$1 million of which is a loan from the Washington State Department of Commerce's Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB). The additional \$1 million is a grant from CERB.

The investment of the .09 funds by the County will support extensions that will reach into unincorporated areas of the County. Constituents from the rural communities in Whitman County frequently approach the Port to ask for help in meeting their telecommunications needs and that the remote nature of these communities makes it even more important for their citizens to have access to reliable, high-speed Internet services to support their needs for information, education, conducting business, healthcare, and safety. The Port of Whitman County maintains a strong focus on ensuring residents and businesses have access to high-quality and affordable broadband services. "The addition of the .09 funds from the County will allow the Port to continue to address this infrastructure problem," says Poire.

Additional information on the Port of Whitman County's telecommunications network can be found at <http://portwhitman.com/doingbusiness/telecommunications>.

The enabling legislation for sales and use tax for public facilities in rural counties (.09 funds) can be found at <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=82.14.370>.

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About the Port of Whitman County

The Port of Whitman County is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all citizens of Whitman County through industrial real estate development, preservation of multi-modal transportation, facilitation of economic development and provision of on-water recreational opportunities.

RCWs 53.08.005, 53.08.370, and 53.08.380 allow Ports and PUDs to build telecommunications infrastructure and offer it wholesale to service providers. Under these provisions, the Port has worked to develop a telecommunication plan and infrastructure to facilitate enhanced telecommunications services countywide. The Port works with telecommunications providers to build infrastructure that helps local providers enhance telecommunication services offered to rural communities.

We invite you to explore our website and learn more about our port and the wonderful Palouse region we call home; a great place to live and a better place to work.